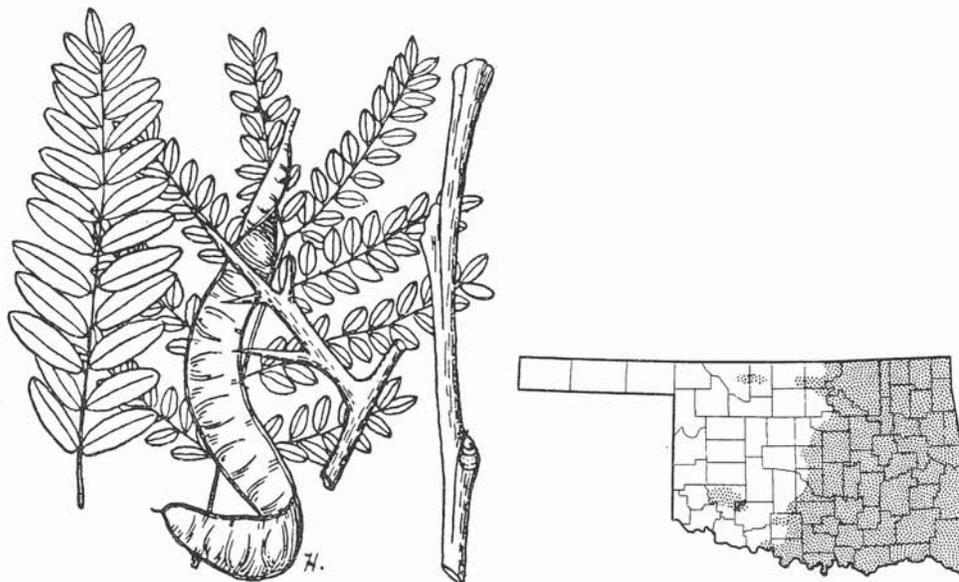


## 107. HONEYLOCUST

*Gleditsia triacanthos* L.

Large spiny tree 70 ft (21 m) high and 1½ ft (0.5 m) in diameter, with open flattened crown and with *large stout shiny dark brown spines*, slightly flattened, *usually branched, on trunk*, branches, and twigs. Twigs slender, slightly zigzag and swollen at nodes, shiny brown, hairless, bearing stout flattened long-pointed spines, often 3-forked. **Buds** few together, partly hidden, tiny, hairless; no end bud.



Leaves both *pinnately and bipinnately compound*, 4-8 in (10-20 cm) long, the axis often with 3-6 pairs of side axes or forks, in late spring. Leaflets *many, paired and stalkless, oblong*, ¾-1½ in (1-3 cm) long, *blunt or rounded at tip, rounded and unequal-sided at base*, with finely wavy edges, *shiny dark green* and hairless above, dull yellow green and nearly hairless beneath, turning yellow in autumn.

Flowers *many* in short narrow clusters (racemes) at leaf bases, small, bell-shaped, *greenish yellow*, ¾ in (1 cm) across the 5 spreading petals, finely hairy, mostly male and female on different twigs or trees in late spring.

Fruits few *very long flat pods* 6-16 in (15-41 cm) long, 1¼ in (3 cm) wide, *dark brown, hairy, slightly curved and twisted*, thick-walled, *not opening*, shedding in late autumn. Seeds many, beanlike, about ¾ in (1 cm) long, flattened, dark brown, in sweetish edible pulp.

Bark gray brown or black, fissured into long narrow scaly ridges, with branched spines sometimes 8 in (20 cm) or more in length.

Wood light red to reddish brown with thick yellowish sapwood, ring porous, coarse-textured, very heavy (sp. gr. .60), very hard, strong, stiff, moderately resistant to decay. Used locally for fenceposts, construction, furniture, interior trim, vehicles, and railroad crossties, but supply is limited.

Scattered in moist soil of flood plain forests, e. half of Okla. and Wichita Mts., local in w. Okla. partly introduced and escaped. Widespread in hardwood forests, mostly in flood plains, Miss. Valley region; naturalized eastward. Zone 4.

Widely planted for shade, ornament, shelterbelts, and hedges. Readily identified by the very large branched spines on the trunk. However, a thornless variety is commonly cultivated and sometimes found wild. The sweetish pulp of the pods, like honey, is consumed by livestock and wildlife and would serve as human food in an emergency.